

CENTENNIAL EDITION

SECTION NO. 3

MEXICO WEEKLY LEDGER

1821 - 1921

"To Our Pride In the Past, and Our Hope for the Future, Let Us Add Vigorous Work in the Living Present."

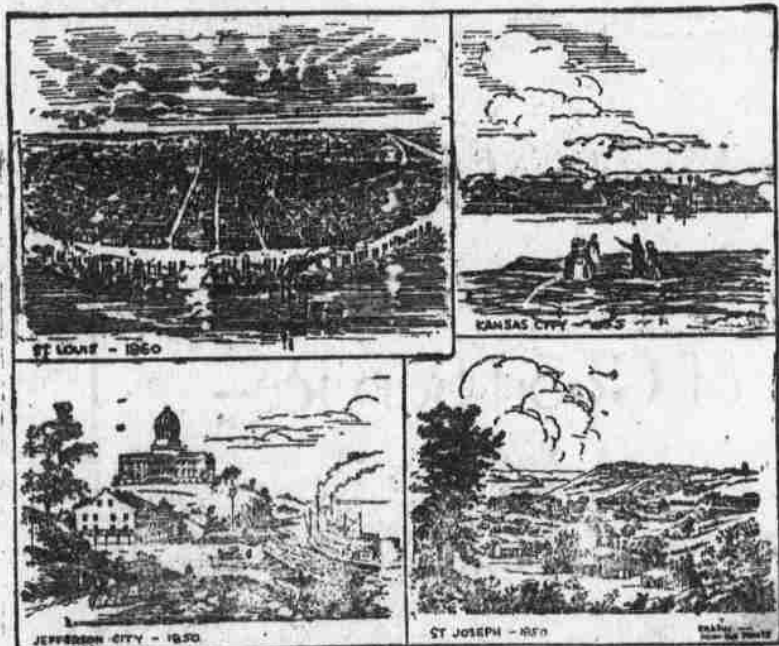
R. M. WHITE & SON, Props. — L. M. WHITE, Editor.

MEXICO, AUDRAIN COUNTY, MISSOURI, THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 1921

Vol. 63 No 24



Missouri Cities Seventy Years Ago



PERHAPS the most striking thing about these pictures of four Missouri cities seventy years ago is the presence in each of them of one or more steamboats. Not barges, or sail boats or keel boats, but big steamboats—side and stern-wheelers, built to carry great numbers of passengers and big cargoes of freight. They indicate the tremendous popularity of water transportation and make us realize the necessity for it in those days when railroad building in Missouri had hardly begun. To some they will bring back pleasant memories of the days when the passage of boats up and down Missouri's rivers meant much in the life of the communities on the river front.

St. Louis, in 1850, was already a vast city, due to its situation on the Mississippi and its prominence as a trade center. The familiar double-stack side-wheelers are shown docked for blocks along the river front. Streets run back straight from the river; the smoke of several chimneys indicates considerable industrial activity; and numerous church towers show how the city was dotted with places of worship. Kansas City, in 1855, had hardly begun to develop. It was a "river front" town, with practically all of its buildings along one street a short distance from the water's edge. A few homes are shown on the hills. St. Joseph, in 1850, was still a village. Sections of the city now covered with business blocks and homes were then farm land, rather heavily wooded but with occasional open fields planted to crops. Jefferson City, in 1840, was already Missouri's capital—and the beautiful little building constructed on Capitol Hill in 1837-38 had attracted widespread attention as one of the three handsomest public buildings in the United States.

Audrain's Court House

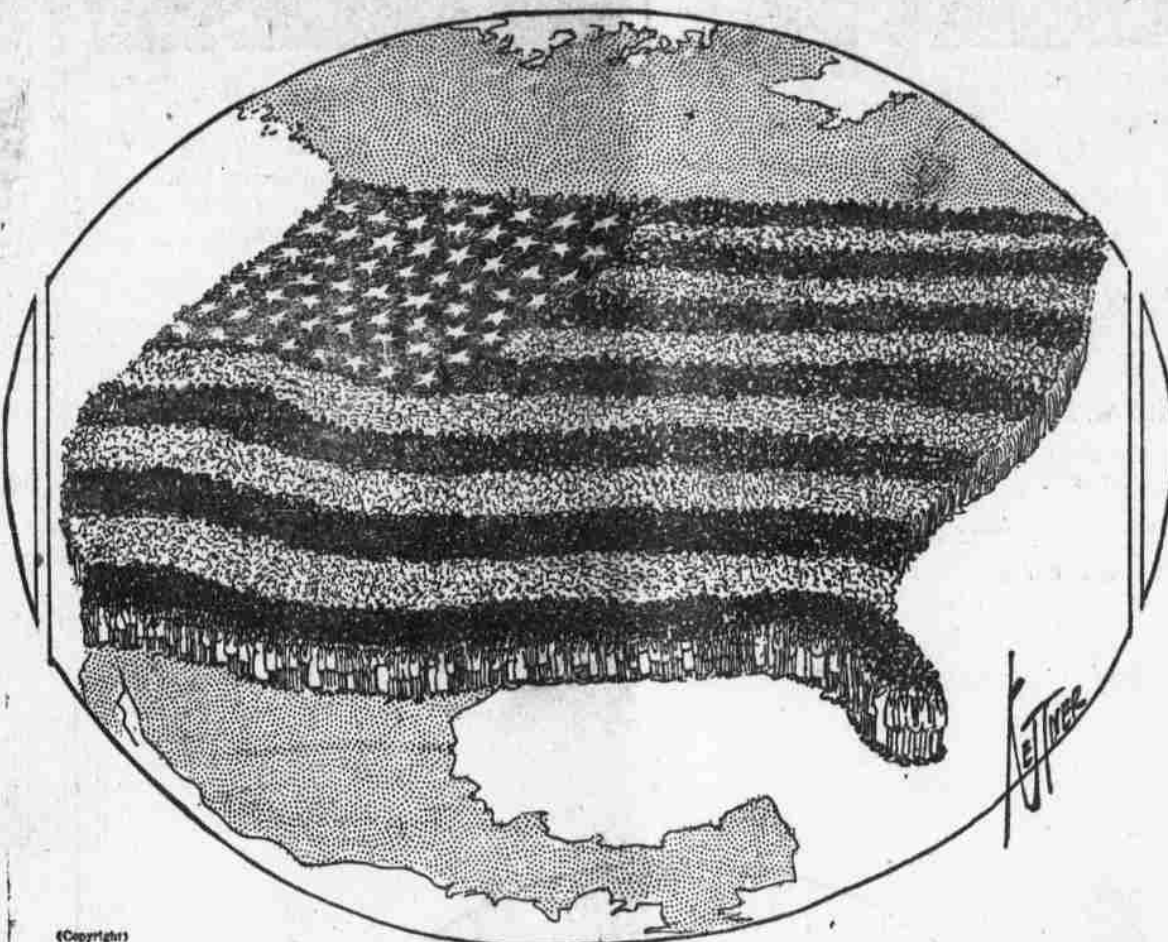


THE AUDRAIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE

This is an old wood cut made from the first picture ever taken of the present Court House, and shows the lawn surrounded by the high iron fence which was itself surrounded by hitchracks. This fence was removed as a result of a Ledger campaign and placed along the front of Elmwood cemetery where it is today.

The building was the fourth Court House Audrain county has had. An eastern art critic, who visited Mexico, stated that the building was one of the finest pieces of architecture of its kind she had ever seen in this part of the country.

One People, One Flag



MEXICO TODAY

According to the 1920 census Mexico has a population of 6,039. The population of Audrain county is 22,000. Mexico is the center of the fire clay industry of Missouri having three large plants in this city. Mexico and Audrain county are the center of the saddle horse world. A well equipped Carnegie library. The State King's Daughters home for aged women. A \$100,000 post office building. A \$150,000 county hospital, and a private hospital. Three modern hotels. Two handsome theatres. Base Ball Park. A public park and fine game fishing in the streams and lakes surrounding the city. The following churches: Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Christian, Episcopal, Catholic, Christian Science, Holiness. One of the best and most progressive public school system in the United States. The Missouri Military Academy, for boys, and Hardin College for girls. Mexico has a large shoe factory, modern ice plant, bottling works, large flour mill and elevators. A public utility company that supplies the city with electricity, water, gas and heat, and supplies electricity to many surrounding towns. Located on the North Cross State Highway, The Golden Belt Route, The Glacier Trail's route, The Pershingway. Improved roads into Mexico being built each year. On two main trunk lines and two branch lines of railroads with 26 passenger trains into the city daily. Another main line, the Burlington-Santa Fe, surveyed and to be built here soon. The best railroad facilities of any city its size in the state. 460 passenger tickets sold here daily on the railroads. 30,000,000 pounds of freight in and out on the three railroads through Mexico per month. Audrain county leads the State of Missouri in the production of oats, is among the leaders in the production of wheat, corn, wool and poultry. Audrain County has many fine herds of blooded cattle and swine to say nothing of the saddle horses being raised here. A fine Elks Club House. A modern Country club with fine golf links. Mexico's business houses are among the finest and most progressive in Missouri. Two Daily Newspapers. Two Weekly Newspapers, a publishing Co., and four job printing plants. A live Chamber of Commerce with a paid secretary. Six miles of brick paved streets and many other hard surfaced and oiled residence streets. A motorized fire department with auxiliary fire truck. Fire Chief inspects monthly fire hazards in business section. A city of homes, schools and churches. Four thriving banks. Two up to date telephone systems. The city where the first \$1,000 trotting and pacing racing stakes were offered; where the first \$1,000 and first \$1,500 saddle horse show rings were held. Only Public Park in state stocked with Elk and Buffalo. Modern Planing Mill. Two modern natatoriums open to the public. A modern laundry. An apron factory. Large Greenhouse. Old Established Cigar Factory. An Apartment House. Eleven Garages. Mail Order Music House. The Factory of the Continental Banking Supply Co.



Laclede and His Fur Traders Found St. Louis



IN 1762, when New Orleans was the seat of French government in Louisiana, and the banks of the Mississippi to the north were known to few white men, a wealthy merchant of New Orleans obtained from the French governor a grant of exclusive right to trade with the Indians on the Missouri river for a period of eight years.

Maxent, the merchant, furnished the money for the enterprise; and Pierre Laclede Liqueur, commonly known as Laclede, agreed to conduct it. Their firm took the name of "The Louisiana Fur Company."

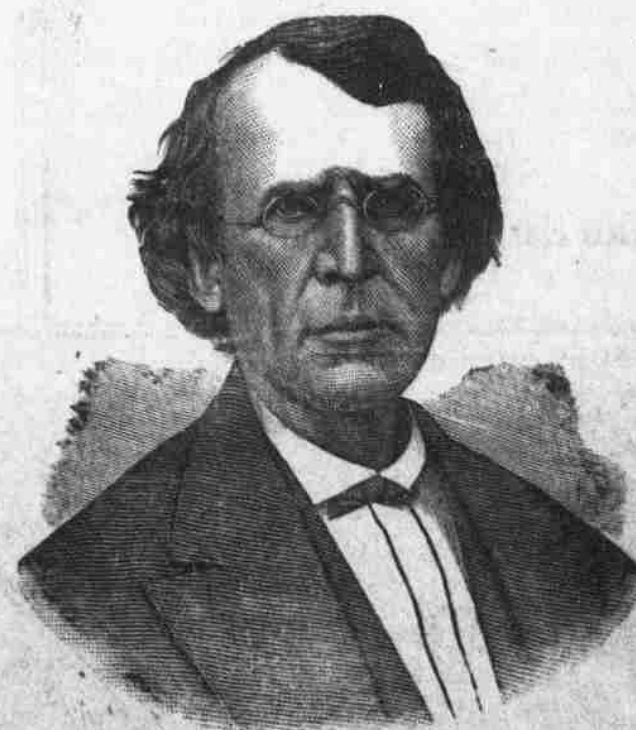
It was a three months' journey up the river from New Orleans to St. Genevieve, which had been established in 1735 as the first permanent settlement in Missouri.

Laclede sailed up the river with a force of mechanics, trappers and hunters, bringing with him a cargo of merchandise to trade with the Indians for furs.

He searched carefully along the west bank of the Mississippi, as far north as the Missouri, for a suitable place to establish a settlement which would become the center of his trading operations. A low bluff a few miles south of the Missouri river, at a point where the Mississippi channel afforded an excellent boat landing, was decided upon. The bank was high enough to give protection from floods; but not too high for the easy loading and unloading of cargoes. Back from the bank was a stretch of level ground broad enough for the proposed settlement.

Laclede was impressed with the advantages of the site, and with the natural beauty of the surroundings. On February 15, 1764, the erection of buildings was begun. "Gentlemen," said Laclede, "I verily believe that we stand on the site of one of the future great cities of the world."

A Missouri Pioneer



GOVERNOR CHAS. H. HARDIN.

of Mexico, served as the chief executive of Missouri from 1874 to 1878, who was the founder of Hardin College and gave to the city of Mexico Hardin Park.

Governor Hardin's home for a great many years was on the farm just north of Mexico which is known today as the Judge Alex Carter farm. The brick house which he built there burned down several years after his death.